

and off the field. We must protect that fair playing field while encouraging college students to take responsibility for their own actions and financial decisions, something all of us here in Congress should learn to do as well.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RAILWAY LABOR MANAGEMENT DISPUTE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this afternoon, I come here with genuine concern about the possibility of the failure to resolve a railroad labor management dispute, and I express my support for that resolution.

I represent a State, the State of Kansas, its people, America's largest supplier of wheat, and a top leader in agricultural markets of many other crops. I can tell you that a labor strike would disrupt the stability of our ag markets and could prove catastrophic to our global food supply.

At a time in which hunger is rampant around the world, again one of the last things we need is more difficulties in getting agriculture, commodities, and food to people around the globe who are looking for a meal tonight. In my State, corn, soybeans, grain, sorghum—that harvest is underway, and farmers need to be able to ship their crops by train around the country and to our ports where the grain will be sent to feed that hungry world.

In parts of Kansas facing severe drought, feed yards, places that we feed cattle, are shipping grain in from other areas of the country to feed their livestock.

Rail service is critical to making sure these producers are able to get the feed they need and to keep their livestock fed and healthy. The U.S. rail network moves critical agricultural commodities across the Nation, and a complete shutdown of the rail system would result in devastating consequences across an already weak supply chain.

The Association of American Railroads found that a nationwide rail shutdown could idle more than 7,000 trains and lose more than \$2 billion a day in missed economic output. As the deadline approaches, we are already seeing the impact of contingency planning by railways, showing that a full shutdown would be totally unacceptable.

With the trucking industry and other transportation systems already at their maximum capacity, there is no alternative plan that could mitigate the losses in case of a rail transportation strike and that rail service coming to an end.

I have been in regular contact with our rail leaders, including those at Union Pacific and the Kansas City

Southern, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, and I continue to urge all parties to reach an agreement.

Our constituents deserve certainty that will come from reaching that agreement. In the event that the conclusion is not reached, I will utilize my opportunities as a Member of the Senate, as a Member of Congress for congressional intervention and work to shield the impact of a rail shutdown across the Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

ISRAEL AND TAIWAN

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, on November 11, 2001—exactly 2 months after the September 11 attacks—President Bush spoke to the United Nations General Assembly about the universal threat of terrorism.

I want to share just a few lines from that speech:

The suffering of September the 11th was inflicted on people of many faiths and many nations. All of the victims, including Muslims, were killed with equal indifference and equal satisfaction by the terrorist leaders.

Time is passing. Yet, for the United States of America, there will be no forgetting September the 11th. We will remember every rescuer who died in honor. We will remember every family that lives in grief. We will remember the fire and ash, the last phone calls, the funerals of the children.

And the people of my country will remember those who have plotted against us. We are learning their names. We are coming to know their faces. There is no corner of the Earth distant or dark enough to protect them. However long it takes, their hour of justice will come.

Every nation has a stake in this cause. As we meet, the terrorists are planning more murder—perhaps in my country, or perhaps in yours. They kill because they aspire to dominate.

Now, 21 years later, I fear that President Biden and many of my Democratic colleagues have forgotten the lessons they learned from that day and in the years that have followed.

What I recall most about the weeks and months following the attacks is that everyone I talked with, no matter their politics, believed that we were facing a battle of good versus evil.

There was a real clarity of conviction that demanded we all choose a side. Would we stand with freedom or with the enemies of freedom? You can dither and dally all you want on national security policy, but there was not much dithering to be done on that point, at least not in 2001.

But now, in the mainstream media and at the highest levels of the Democratic Party, we see that clarity of conviction ceding ground to moral relativism. It infected this weekend's remembrance. It infected the debate surrounding Joe Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. And it has all but derailed any serious discussion about emerging threats, not just from terrorist organizations but from hostile regimes that the Biden administration seems determined to appease.

During this past August work period, I had the opportunity to visit two of

the hot spots. Working with our counterparts in Taiwan and Israel was illuminating for many reasons. I wish every single one of my colleagues would get off their computers, get on a plane, and go talk to them about what it is like to spend every day on the frontlines in this battle against the new "axis of evil."

Here in the United States, we are blessed by the benefit of physical distance from the hot spots. And it is no guarantee of protection, and I believe it has lulled many of my colleagues into a false sense of security concerning the threats we face.

Our friends in Taipei and Jerusalem don't share this benefit. They spend their days watching missiles fly closer to their homes and listening to authoritarian propaganda from Beijing and Iran that threatens innocent families with extinction for the crime of simply existing.

In Israel, they are gravely concerned about the Biden administration's desire to enter into a new nuclear deal with Tehran. They worry that this will move Iran closer to a nuclear warhead. They are concerned about what would happen with the billions of dollars that would flow into Iran's coffers. What would happen with sanctions relief? How will they use this money?

Overall, their fears are dominated by the knowledge that, yes, indeed, Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. How will they use the money to finance the work of their proxies? They are particularly concerned how this will instigate growth and expansion of terrorism in Palestine.

In Taiwan, they are concerned about the growing intensity of Chinese Communist Party aggression. I have also heard grave concerns from other island nations that if China overruns Taiwan, they could be the next to fall.

But above all, they conveyed a strong desire to continue working with the United States. Yes, we are their preferred partner. They need our foreign military sales. They want to be able to defend themselves. It means they have to increase their defense capabilities.

Taiwan and Israel aren't the only hot spots that should concern us, but they both represent the first line of defense against the growing influence of the new "axis of evil."

The one thing I heard, over and over again when I was overseas, is that if we allow these nations to become overrun, it will start a domino effect in the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East that will be difficult, if not impossible, to stop.

And as we have seen before, when we give nations like China and Iran an inch, what do they do? They take a mile.

So it is incomprehensible to me that Joe Biden and the Democrats are not doing everything—everything—in their power to stop this from happening.

Over the past few years, I have watched the President and his allies treat the threat posed by the new "axis

of evil” like an academic problem, rather than what it is, a true threat to our freedoms.

There is no excuse for this. They all have access to television and the internet. They know exactly who is in charge in Tehran and Beijing and what they are willing to do to expand their power.

So why have we made so little progress repatriating our supply chains and protecting our economy from the Chinese Communist Party? Why is Joe Biden trying to force the American people into another failed nuclear deal with Iran? Why are they not listening to our closest allies and partners in these regions? Why is this administration having Russia negotiate a new Iran nuclear deal?

If this country continues to treat China and Iran like difficult neighbors instead of a threat to our freedoms, eventually the balance of power will shift in their favor. Nations like Taiwan and Israel will fall. The United States could suffer another devastating attack.

Joe Biden and the Democrats have wasted time rejecting reality in favor of appeasement. They believe that they can negotiate the upper hand and settle things diplomatically. But this isn't diplomacy; this is a hostage situation. If it weren't, images of missiles flying towards civilians would have reignited the same clarity of conviction we all felt after the towers fell and the people in charge of our government would be shouting warnings from the rooftops rather than negotiating away our security behind closed doors.

I would remind my Democratic colleagues that U.N. human rights reports and strongly worded statements and all the other trappings of your current brand of diplomacy mean nothing if you are not willing to put lives and livelihoods on the line to defend them.

So it is time to decide: Will you stand with freedom or with the enemies of freedom?

I want to reiterate President Bush's assessment of the terrorists who attacked our country 21 years ago this week because it is an apt comparison to be made. “They kill because they aspire to dominate.” Think about that one. “They kill because they aspire to dominate.”

What the regimes in Tehran and Beijing are doing right now to our friends in Israel and Taiwan looks different from what al-Qaida did to us on 9/11, but their goals are the same. They seek global domination, and they are growing impatient. We can either wait to see what they will do next or we can stand with our allies and partners and demonstrate our resolve to ensure that the new axis of evil fails.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UKRAINE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague from the great State of Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, to share with the Senate and the country some of the things that we learned from our recent trip to Ukraine.

I first want to thank Senator PORTMAN. He comes to the floor every week—never gives up, whether things are good or bad—to talk about what is happening in Ukraine.

President Zelenskyy was incredibly grateful—that was the first thing he wanted us to report back to the Senate and to the country—incredibly grateful for all America has done to stand with Ukraine.

We know that this is a country that has given its all. Sometimes we wonder in our own country: What would we put on the line for democracy? Are we going to vote? Or things like that. The people in this country have put their very lives on the line every single day: ballerinas donning camo and going to the frontline; exhausted workers at a nuclear plant trying to protect not just Ukraine but all of Europe in what is the biggest nuclear powerplant in Europe and which supplies 20 percent of Ukrainian energy; the cellist playing beautiful melodies in the bombed-out remnants of a town square to remind people that no matter what Vladimir Putin did to their country, no matter what he did with his inhumane barbarism, culture and love is there in Ukraine, and it is not going away.

Senator PORTMAN and I visited the mass grave in Bucha, and in Irpin we saw many, many apartment buildings that were completely blown apart from the bombs.

We saw firsthand the strength of the Ukrainian people and their leaders. But just as Vladimir Putin has shown his true colors with the bombing and the shelling near a nuclear powerplant, the people of Ukraine have shown their colors in a brilliant yellow and blue. Over the past 6 months since the invasion, their bravery and humanity consistently shine through.

We had, together, traveled to Ukraine. And the last group of Senators who visited before the war started was Senators SHAHEEN, MURPHY, BLUMENTHAL, CRAMER, and WICKER. We witnessed the incredible resolve of the people back then, and it has only grown stronger.

In our meeting with President Zelenskyy for over an hour and with Defense Minister Reznikov and the President's Chief of Staff, we heard, time and time again: the helpfulness of the HIMARS. In fact, the Embassy staff told us that they went to a take-out place in Ukraine and that the people who worked in the restaurant didn't even know they were with our Embassy but knew they were American, and they gave them their bag of food, and on the bag was written the

words “Thanks for the HIMARS.” That is how the people of Ukraine are focused day in and day out on what is happening in their region.

We also, of course, talk about the counteroffensive, and I know Senator PORTMAN will talk in detail about what is happening. And we know the fight is not over. Russia has retaliated by striking infrastructure just in the last few days, and Ukraine is still on the move. But, if anything, this is certainly a sign that our aid—our humanitarian aid, our economic aid, and our military aid—has been very helpful.

The situation, of course, remains dangerous, especially in the Zaporizhzhia region, where the nuclear powerplant is located. We have a situation where the Russians have been bombing and shelling around that plant, where several times Ukrainians have lost power for the power that powers that plant. But also, of course, that plant provides energy. All of it is dangerous.

We called for the IAEA when we were there—they visited literally the next day—to be able to inspect that plant. They were able to—14 inspectors, with 2 being allowed to stay on indefinitely. And, of course, we have called for a demilitarized zone, as has our government.

We also got to meet with the 101st Airborne in Poland, and they, again, underscored our commitment to our NATO allies, the work they have been doing, including helping the Ukrainians remotely to make repairs on various missiles and various weapons and the like. It is an incredible story.

Last week, our administration reported that Moscow is in the process of purchasing rockets and artillery shells from North Korea. It shows how much trouble they are in.

This Senate voted nearly unanimously to allow Finland and Sweden to join NATO. That must happen as quickly as possible because we want to see a united front. As Senator PORTMAN pointed out many times on our trip, there are over 40 nations that are aiding in this effort; it is not America alone.

I always think of that viral video that President Zelenskyy did. He knew the importance of staying in his country and not abandoning his post when the Russians invaded. If you think back to that day, if he had done that, if he had left for a safer location, we would never be where we are today, standing up for democracy. But what he said that night was simply this: We are here. He said: We are here. From that moment on, he and his people inspired the world. Now it is our time to ensure the Ukrainians—as we move forward with our next continuing resolution and supplemental with the budget—that we are here for them; that we know what they are up against, and it is evil, and we stand with their democracy.

Again, I want to thank Senator PORTMAN for his incredible leadership